

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Protocol and give its advice and consent to ratification.

**George W. Bush**

The White House,  
November 3, 2005.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 4. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

**Remarks Following Discussions With  
President Nestor Kirchner of  
Argentina in Mar del Plata,  
Argentina**

*November 4, 2005*

**President Kirchner.** We have had an eventful meeting with the President of the United States. We have considered issues related to our bilateral relations between Argentina and the U.S. We have considered the situation in the region. We have listened to each other and what we have to say about domestic matters in our respective countries and how our countries are doing at the moment. I think we have been quite candid in our dialog, and we have spoken quite clearly with the President of the United States.

And as President of the Argentine Republic, I am pleased to have had this meeting, during which we have been able to convey to the President of the United States our thoughts on a wide variety of issues.

So in a nutshell, that's what we have dealt with, and I would now like to give the floor to the President of the U.S.

**President Bush.** Thank you for your hospitality. Laura and I thank you and the Senator for such a warm welcome. This is my first trip to Argentina—I hope it is not my last trip. However, this is not our first meeting. This is our third meeting, and every time we have met, I have come away impressed by your candor, your passion for the people of this beautiful land.

And as we discussed—the first time we met until now, the economy has changed in quite dramatic fashion, thanks to wise decisions you have made. So congratulations for dealing with a difficult circumstance and

making decisions that have improved the lives of your people.

Needless to say, the President was quite firm in his belief that the IMF ought to have a different attitude toward Argentina. He has been an outspoken person for reform. I listened very carefully to his point of view. I was pleased that the United States was helpful during the early part of his term at the IMF, and I suggested that his record is such now that he can take his case to the IMF with a much stronger hand. And so I appreciated the conversation there, and I appreciate your candor.

I also want to thank you, Mr. President, for sending the White Helmets. These were people that came down, health specialists to help some of our folks deal with the devastation caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. It was a gesture of grand friendship, and the American people are grateful. The American people are grateful for the contributions Argentines have made to our country. I mean, we've got all kinds of people in America—Ginobili—I don't know if you've heard of Manu Ginobili. *[Laughter]* He's made a vital contribution to the basketball team from the State in which I live. But he's also a good ambassador for your country, and people of Argentine heritage have contributed mightily to America, and we're grateful for that.

We had a good discussion about a range of issues, as the President said. Argentina and the United States have a lot in common. We both believe in rule of law. We both believe in minority rights. We both believe in free press. We both believe in free religion. We both understand that institutions are important for the embetterment of the people, democratic institutions. At times, those institutions have been under assault in our two countries, and it's important as leaders of our countries—elected leaders—to stand up and defend those institutions.

And so, Mr. President, thank you for that dialog, and thank you for that discussion. The President reminded me that U.S. involvement in the neighborhood is—can be constructive and positive, and I agree. And I reminded him that the best involvement that can happen is when countries make wise decisions to attract investment, that there be consistency in law, which he agrees with, that

contracts be honored, that when a person makes an investment, that there is not certainty of success but certainty that the rules won't change, that when a government fights corruption, that government sends a signal to investors, large and small, that this is a good place to take risk.

I also reminded the President, we wouldn't be having this discussion if our respective economies weren't strong. And the United States economy is strong. It's healthy. We've overcome some serious challenges recently. But the investor climate in the United States, the willingness for people to invest is good. And the fact that Argentina is picking up additional direct foreign investment is positive. It shows that the country is making wise decisions.

We're going to talk about jobs later on, and that's an important subject. We discussed the need to make sure education systems were strong and vibrant, in order to make sure people can take advantage of opportunities when they arise.

I was pleased that the President was talking about a very ambitious education program, in terms of increasing expenditures, the percentage of GDP by, I think he said 2010, to be a significant increase. And that's wise. That's called leadership. And it seems like to me that at this summit, that if you believe in the values we discussed and if you understand how to make rational decisions, we ought to share those concepts with other countries. And that's why I'm glad to be down here. This is an opportunity to positively affirm our belief in democracy, in human rights and human dignity.

And so I want to thank you for being a good host. It's not easy to host all these countries. It's particularly not easy to host, perhaps, me. *[Laughter]* But thank you for doing it; you're doing a fine job. *[Laughter]* I'm looking forward to it. I'm looking forward to our meetings. I'm looking forward to this evening's cultural event and dinner, and I've been looking forward to our discussion. It was a good one.

Mr. President, thank you very much. It's an honor to be here.

**President Kirchner.** Thank you very much for being here. Again, we had a very clear, open, candid meeting. We clearly ex-

pressed our own thoughts. And as President of Argentina, I'm leaving this meeting feeling very satisfied because it wasn't a meeting looking for nice words but to speak the truth, and each of us did just that. Thank you very much for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:02 a.m. at the Hermitage Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Christina Fernandez de Kirchner of Argentina, wife of President Kirchner; and Emanuel D. "Manu" Ginobili, guard, National Basketball Association's San Antonio Spurs. President Kirchner spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### **Remarks at the Summit of the Americas and an Exchange With Reporters in Mar del Plata**

*November 4, 2005*

**The President.** Thank you all for coming. I'll answer a couple of questions in a second. I do want to say how pleased I am to be here in Argentina, advancing an agenda that is based upon my belief and our country's belief that there are certain universal values.

One of those values is that free societies are important to the progress of men and women, but free societies also require institutions that are solid and sound, institutions such as the right to worship freely, the right to write, say what you want in the press freely, the right to campaign and express your opinions freely. It's very important that there be solid rule of law and independent judiciary.

And so I'm pleased to be down here. It's a good place to spend Laura's birthday, which is today. I don't know if you knew that—no, I know you did, okay—but anyway, don't bring it up when you see her. *[Laughter]*

But it's—I just had a meeting earlier with the Central American countries—young democracies, struggling to succeed, making good progress toward making sure institutions are well-rooted. I say Central American, plus Dominican Republic. And we talked about how pleased we were that we got the free trade agreement through, at least